



INDIANA COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY 2014

An initiative of Learn More Indiana
**Partner of the
American College Application Campaign®**

SCHOOL MANUAL 2014 Edition

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About the Campaign

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC), an effort of the American Council on Education (ACE), is a national initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The purpose is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits at least one admissions application.

In Indiana, College Application Day is part of the state's annual **College GO! Week** campaign, which takes place each August through November with a statewide kick-off week the last week of September. College Application Day is supported by an advisory council and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. Learn More Indiana, an initiative of the Commission, facilitates College GO! Week and provides materials. For more information about College GO! Week or Learn More Indiana, please visit LearnMoreIndiana.org.

In 2014, Indiana's College Application Day will be held on **October 28** (although schools are permitted to use an alternative date). Many Indiana colleges, as well as colleges nationwide, have priority scholarship deadlines of November 1. At local College Application Day events across the state, high school seniors will complete college applications online with assistance from school staff and volunteers. They will then sign up for their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) personal identification number (PIN). As students depart the event, they will receive information about Indiana's FAFSA assistance programs taking place in February to ensure students are prepared to meet the state's March 10 financial aid filing deadline.

Responsibilities of Participating High Schools

High schools implementing a successful College Application Campaign event at their school will include the following as part of their initiative:

- **Hosting a program** during the school day that is open to any student interested in applying with a focus on engaging first-generation students, low-income students, and students who may otherwise not apply to college. Some schools may host more than one day, depending on the size of the senior class.
- **Reserving** space for the event, ideally school computer lab(s).
- **Convening a school team** comprised of staff, student leaders and community members.
- **Advertising** the event, or engaging a community partner to assist with this task.
- **Ensuring that students are prepared** to participate in the event (essays are completed prior to the program, students have researched the institutions to which they want to apply, etc.).
- **Engaging the local community**, students, families, and others through volunteer opportunities, information letters, and advertising the program.
- **Collecting simple data** and reporting to Learn More Indiana following the event.
- **Following up with students** after the event to ensure applications submitted are complete (transcripts, college entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, submitting a complete FAFSA, etc.).



Building Your School Team

A high school's school team should consist of at least a school counselor or assistant principal. Ideally, teachers, all counselors, other administrators and student leaders will also participate. Schools with a Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program should include all JAG advisory committee members and a JAG student.

A school should also consider engaging outside stakeholders to maximize the impact of the event. Community partners can advertise the event, recruit volunteers, provide in-kind donations, etc. Potential community partners include:

- Indiana College Success Coalition members (see LearnMoreIndiana.org/coalitions to contact your county's coalition)
- Admissions representatives from local colleges (two-year and four-year)
- Local business leaders
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- College access initiatives (federally-funded, state-funded, or community-based)
- Faith-based community
- Non-profit organizations such as the YMCA, 4H, Boys and Girls Club, etc.
- PTA and other parents/family members who want to be engaged in the process
- Student leaders in your high school
- Retired school personnel
- Local government officials or elected representatives

The school team will make a plan for:

- Preparing students in class or out of class. English classes may want to focus on college essays, for example. Students should know about upcoming SAT and ACT tests and have resources for studying.
- Communicating with parents, including sending home a College Application Information sheet (available at CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org).
- Communicating with seniors.
- Recruiting volunteers.
- Logistics for the day of the event (computer space, printing hand outs for students, etc.).
- Thanking volunteers for their time.
- Following up with students.
- Reporting data to Learn More Indiana.

Students involved in the school team can contribute in the following ways:

- Creating posters to advertise the event.
- Inviting at least one non-JAG friend to attend the event (every student should do this)
- Make labels for volunteers that say "Ask me! I graduated from ____."
- Writing thank you notes to volunteers.



Materials & Suggested Event Procedure

Learn More Indiana and the American College Application Campaign have provided materials for schools to use during College Application Day. All materials are available on the College GO! Week website (CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org).

The materials can be used in the following way:

- Several weeks prior to the event, send home the **Parent Information Letter** and the **College Application Day Student Worksheet**. Encourage students to complete the worksheet before attending the event.
- The **College Research Worksheet** can be completed at school to help students find their college fit before applying. It can also be given as homework or optional material.
- As students arrive at the event, give them the **Student Instructions** handout. Help students find <http://www.in.gov/collegegoweeek/2471.htm> and begin an application by clicking on the pencil icon next to their college of choice. They can find applications for colleges that are not in Indiana on the college's admissions website.
- As students complete their applications, instruct them to write down additional items they need to provide to colleges on the Student Instruction handout (such as transcript, SAT or ACT scores, etc.) They should receive a **Next Steps** handout, and can write specific information on the back.
- When students complete applications, instruct them to obtain their FAFSA PIN at <http://pin.ed.gov>. Then give them a **FAFSA handout** and instruct them to write their PIN on the handout and keep it in a safe location.
- Before students exit, ask them to sign the **Sign-out Sheet**.
- After the event, assign someone to collect the data from the Sign-out Sheet and report it to Learn More Indiana via the **Data Reporting Sheet**.

Timeline

Below appears a suggested timeline for making sure your school's College Application Day flows smoothly and meets its goal of 100% of seniors applying to a postsecondary education option before graduation. Not all schools will implement every suggested activity.

Right Away

- Convene your school team.
- Pick a date for your school's College Application Day (suggested: October 28).
- Reserve computer room(s) for the day.
- Email Learn More Indiana at info@che.in.gov to alert us that you plan to participate. Participating schools will get extra consideration for the College GO! Week grant for \$1,000. Please visit LearnMoreIndiana.org/contests to learn more about the grant.

Week of September 15 (six weeks before event)

- Recruit volunteers. Consider reaching out to your county's Indiana College Success Coalition (LearnMoreIndiana.org/coalitions), school PTA or PTO, local youth non-profits, and parents or grandparents of students. If your school has a criminal background check requirement, be sure to follow those guidelines.



- Start advertising the event to seniors. Student groups may be able to make announcements or posters.
- Start asking teachers to plan related lessons. For example, English teachers could help students with essays in class. All teachers should be prepared to write recommendation letters.

Week of September 22 (College GO! Week; five weeks before event)

- Attend webinar on Indiana's College Application Day (see CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org for exact date and time) or view archived webinar after the event.
- Send home **College Application Day Student Worksheet** and **Parent Information Letter** (available online at CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org).
- Remind students of the event via announcements.
- Encourage students to begin college research. Begin at LearnMoreIndiana.org/colleges (which connects to College Navigator and other resources). You can also use the **College Research Worksheet** available as part of College Application Day (on CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org).
- Continue recruiting volunteers.

Week of September 29 (four weeks before event)

- Provide eligible students with application fee waiver information. Some fee waiver information is included at the end of the **College Application Day Student Worksheet**.

Week of October 6 (three weeks before event)

- Arrange a schedule for your event, including which groups or classes of students will participate at what time.
- Create a schedule for volunteers, taking into account the availability of your volunteers, as well as breaks and lunch. Local businesses may want to donate lunch in support of seniors who are applying to college.

Week of October 13 (two weeks before event)

- Remind teachers, counselors and administrators of the event schedule and ensure all seniors will have the opportunity to participate.
- Print all materials that you will use on the day of the event. All items are available on CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org. Additionally, if you anticipate that some students will need to use hard copy applications, make copies to have available. Suggested handouts include:
 - Extra copies of **College Application Day Student Worksheet** for students who have forgotten it
 - **Student Instructions** handout
 - **Next Steps** handout
 - **FAFSA Completion Event** Handout
 - **Volunteer Tasks** (edit with specific tasks for your volunteers)
 - **Sign-out Sheet** (be sure to have plenty of pages, along with pens and clipboards)

Week of October 20 (one week before event)

- Make an announcement to remind students that the event is next week, and remind them that they will need to:



- Know where they would like to apply
- Have a plan for application fees and to speak with school counselor if they believe they qualify for a fee waiver
- Write required essays or personal statements, have them proofed, in a final version, and bring to the event on a flash drive or as an email attachment that they can access.
- Gather the information needed to complete applications. The **College Application Day Student Worksheet** contains all necessary information.
- Make final preparations for your event.
- Encourage school staff to wear college clothing on the day(s) of the event.
- Alert your local media about your event. A sample press release is available at CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org.
- Send volunteers a reminder about the event a day or two prior to your event.
- Place a reminder about the event of your school's website home page.
- Double check that your computer room(s) will be well stocked with paper and ink cartridges for printing confirmation pages or other necessary information.

Your College Application Day! *Enjoy your College Application Day!*

- Welcome volunteers and thank them for their support!
 - Let them know what their role is for the day, and ensure they receive a badge or sticker identifying them as a volunteer.
- Students should register for their FAFSA PIN during College Application Day.
- Participating students should sign-out of the event and provide the requested information.
- Ensure students get the **Next Steps** and **FAFSA Completion Event** handouts after they apply to college.

After Your Event

- Submit any the "Data Reporting Form" to Learn More Indiana.
- Communicate the program's impact with any local media that reported on College Application Day.
- Thank your volunteers.
- Follow up with school team to share your success!

School Team & Volunteer Tasks

Although familiarity with the college application process is a plus, it is not required for someone to fulfill a useful task and have a meaningful volunteer experience at a participating high school. Here are a few tasks that volunteers (or school team members) could contribute to the initiative at a high school:

- Post directional signs in the school for the event. Good signage is key to reminding students of the event and getting them to the right place.
- Wear college gear and encourage students that they can complete college.
- Greet students as they arrive to the computer lab. Ensure that they have a completed College Application Information sheet (available at CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org).



- Help students find <http://www.in.gov/collegegoweeek/2471.htm> and begin an application by clicking on the pencil icon next to their college of choice. It is a good idea to bookmark this URL on all computers before the event begins. If the school does not have enough computers or stable online service, the counselor office should be prepared with paper applications. Volunteers, in that case, can hand out applications.
- Guide students through the college application process and help answer any questions students may have, regardless of where the student wishes to apply.
- Monitor printers to ensure that any applications that need to be printed remain in order and replenish the paper supply as needed.
- Help ensure students register for the FAFSA PIN after they submit their college application(s) at <http://pin.ed.gov>.
- Share personal college experiences with students, as requested.
- Hand out materials to students after they complete their college application(s) including the FAFSA handout (available at CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org).
- Assist students in listing the items they still need to provide, such as a high school transcript (available for free via e-Transcript), recommendation letters, SAT or ACT scores, etc.
- Congratulate each student on applying to college!

Additional Support

Thank you for participating in Indiana's College Application Day. In Indiana, this initiative of the American College Application Campaign is facilitated and supported by Learn More Indiana. Additional support is available by contacting Learn More Indiana at info@learnmore.org.

Support materials for College Application Day, student goals for College GO! Week, worksheets and activities for students in grades K-12, and College GO! Week promotional materials are available at www.CollegeGoWeekIndiana.org.

More information about Indiana's FAFSA events and resources is available at www.CashforCollegeIndiana.org. FAFSA Friday will be held February 20, 2015 at noon and 6 p.m. (EST) at www.FafsaFriday.org. College Goal Sunday will be held at over 40 locations across the state on February 22, 2015 at 2 p.m. (local time).